(vii) As in the case of SC/STs, the Government has implemented a scheme called the Pre-Examination Coaching for weaker sections including minorities and OBCs.

(b) and (c). No, Sir, there is no such proposal at present.

[English]

Allocation of Foodgrains

2450. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether off take of foodgrains out of total foodgrains allotted under the Public Distribution System for the tribals and drought prone areas has been less than 50% during the last financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to make some changes in the system of fixing quotas of foodgrains for States under the Public Distribution System;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Out of about 103.68 lakh tonnes of wheat & rice allocated for Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) in about 1775 identified blocks consisting of hilly, drought prone remote, and tribal areas, the quantity lifted by the States/UTs was about 43 lakh tonnes in 1995-96. Hence the off take under RPDS during 1995-96 against the allocation was about 41.5%.

(c) to (e). As per the existing practice the allocation of wheat & rice for the Public Distribution System (PDS) is made for States/UTs on month to month basis according to the local availability, production, off-take trend, relative needs, etc. The allocation of foodgrains to States/UTs is supplemental in nature and is not meant for the entire need of any State/UT. In so far the Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) is concerned the allocation is normally made @ 20kg. per family per month. Final decision to make changes in the system has not been taken so far.

Licences to New Sugar Factories

2451. SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) the number and details of applications received from the Government of Karnataka for issue of licences for new sugar Factories and also for issue of licences for expansion during the last two years till date;

(b) the number of applications approved under both the categories, separately;

(c) the number of applications pending, alongwith the reasons for their pendency; and

(d) the time by which the pending applications are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) :

(a) and (b). 56 applications were received through the Ministry of Industry, Deptt. of Industrial Policy and promotion for grant of letters of intent/industrial licences for setting up of new sugar factories & 9 applications for expansion in the existing units during the last two years, i.e., 1994 and 1995 (January to December). Out of 56 proposals for new sugar factories, 15 have been approved and all the 9 proposals of expansion have been approved.

(c) and (d). As on 30.6.1996, 13 applications received through the Ministry of Industry, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion for grant of letters of intent/industrial licences for setting up of new sugar factories were pending consideration of the screening committee of the Ministry of Food.

It is not possible, at present, to specify any time frame in this regard.

[Translation]

Blackmarketing of Wheat, Rice and Sugar

2452. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI :
SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT :

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) the details of Fair Price Shopkeepers caught red handed while blackmarketing good quality wheat, rice and sugar during each of the last three years and current year State/Union Territory-wise;

(b) the value of goods seized therefrom during the above period State/Union Territory-wise;

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government against the persons apprehended for blackmarketing; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to check such blackmarketing?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b) Functioning of Public Distribution System (PDS) is a vast operation involving distribution of millions of tons of foodgrains, sugar, edible oil, kerosene

throughout the country and, as such, a few shortcomings here and there cannot be ruled out. Certain instances of blackmarketing in essential commodities like wheat, rice and sugar have also come to the knowledge of the Government. However, this Department does not maintain details of such irregularities against the Fair Price Shopkeepers in PDS. It is presumed that these details are being maintained by the concerned States/ UT Governments as the operational responsibility for implementation of PDS rests with the respective State/ UT Governments.

(c) and (d). Checking of malpractices is a continuous process. Central and State Governments are continuing their efforts to check malpractices effectively. The Central Government has enacted Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 to tackle such problems. The operational responsibility of proper distribution of PDS commodities as well as enforcement of EC Act, 1955 and PB Act, 1980 lies with the State Governments. The Union Government monitors enforcement operations of the State Governments/UT Administrations and advises them from time to time to intensify action under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and similar legislation to check malpractices/blackmarketing of commodities meant for Public Distribution System. On this subject, the Union Minister for Civil Supplies has recently addressed a communication to the Chief Ministers/ Administrators of all the State Governments/UTs to activate their enforcement machinery and to take prompt action wherever instances of blackmarketing etc. come to their notice.

[English]

ED Agents

2453. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of Extra Departmental Delivery Agents in the country;

(b) whether the Union Government have received any memorandum from ED delivery agents for regularisation of their services;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) As on 31st March, 1996, the total number of Extra Departmental Delivery Agents in the country was 79,958.

(b) and (c). Yes, Sir. Several Memorandums have been received in this office seeking improvements in the Service conditions and regularisation of the services of Ed agents including Extra Departmental Delivery Agents viz. grant of leave, pay-scales, increments, gratutiy, pension etc.

(d) The Memoranudm mentioned in (b) above have been considered from time to time and improvements wherever feasible made. A committee headed by Justice Talwar to look into all aspects of the service conditons of ED Agents has been apppinted. In the process two instalments of interim Reliefs have been sanctioned to the ED Agents.The quantum of Ex-gratia Gratuity has also been increased to Rs.6000/- recently. Several other improvemnts have also been made in the combined duty allowance paid to the ED Branch Postmasters and Stationery Allowance. 100% vacancies in Group 'D' Departmental Cadre and 50% vacnacies in Departmentla Postmen Cadre earmarked for outsiders are also offered to the Senior most eligiblie ED Agents. Such of the ED Agents as get recruited in Departmental Group 'D' and Postman Cadres become eligible for all the failcities and privileges applicable to the Departmental Employees.

However, the workload in the ED Post Offices reanges between two and five hours per day whereas Departmental Post Offices work for full eight hours. In view of this and other relevance considerations, namely, functional and financial, after careful examination it has not been considered feasible to regularise the services of all Extra Departmental Agents including Extra Departmental Delivery Agents.

Training Complex of FCI, Gurgaon

2454. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 4064, dated August 23, 1994 and state:

(a) the detailed reasons for not completing and commissioning the Training Complex at Gurgaon by December 1995;

(b) the time limit by which the said work is proposed to be executed;

(c) the manner in which the Government propose to compensate the losses suffered by the owners of the properties occupied by FCI at East of Kailash, New Delhi even after the expiry of the lease deed as far back as 14 years ago;

(d) whether the Government propose to investigate the matter and take action against the officials who are responsible for such an undue delay in vacating the above properties and not fulfilling their commitment; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MIISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) At the time of preparation of preliminary estimate,